

Building Permitting

Permits provide a means for the City to reduce the potential hazards of unsafe construction and therefore ensuring the public health, safety and welfare. Building permitting is the process through which the City ensures compliance with all codes and ordinances relative to the construction of buildings and building sites. The City of College Station requires contractors to register prior to obtaining a building permit. A homeowner may obtain a building permit to perform work on a building that is owned and occupied by him as his homestead without registering with the City as a contractor. However, licensed contractors must obtain all electrical, plumbing, and mechanical permits.

Generally, building permits will fall into one of two categories - residential or commercial. In each case, the process will include the review and approval of construction and site plans, payment of permit fees, issuance of a building permit, scheduled inspections of the work in progress and approval at its completion.

Once a building permit is issued, construction work must begin within 180 days of the issuance of a building permit or the permit becomes invalid. Once construction begins, at least one (1) inspection must occur for each 180 days of construction or the work will be considered abandoned and require the issuance of a new permit.

After construction on a building has been completed with satisfactory inspections, a Certificate of Occupancy is needed in order to occupy and use the structure. This document certifies that the structure has been built in compliance with all ordinances and regulations.

The City's Building Inspection Office is the main contact throughout the process and will coordinate plan review and inspection services for the development.

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Building permits provide permission by the Building Official to erect, demolish, move, add to, structurally alter a building, or change the occupancy of a building or structure. It certifies that Building and Inspections has found the proposed building to be in compliance with the Building Code and the provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance. All buildings must be in compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance and all adopted building codes, unless otherwise directed by the Zoning Board of Adjustment or the Construction Board of Appeals.

After the submission of a complete application, the Building Official makes a determination of whether the intended uses, buildings, or structures comply with all applicable regulations, standards, and building code. The Building Official will not issue a building permit unless the plans, specifications, and intended use of such building or structures conform to the UDO and the building code.

Certificate of Occupancy

A Certificate of Occupancy (C.O.) ensures that a structure complies with all ordinances and codes for the City of College Station, thereby assuring the applicant that the structure is ready for occupancy. This document, obtained through the City's Building Inspection Office, is required for both new residential and commercial buildings, as well as some tenant changes in commercial buildings.

The Certificate of Occupancy should not be confused with a building permit, which only allows initial construction to take place. A C.O. is a document that is required prior to the occupation of the structure.

A certificate of occupancy is required for any of the following:

- Occupancy and use of a building hereafter erected or enlarged;
- Change in use of an existing building to a different Use Category; or
- Any change in a nonconforming use or structure.

It is unlawful to occupy any building that does not have a valid certificate of occupancy or temporary certificate of occupancy.

Upon request of the final building inspection, the Building Official will make a determination for a certificate of occupancy for the use or structure. If the Building Official determines that the use or structure complies with all applicable provisions of the building code and the UDO, a certificate of occupancy will be issued.

Residential C.O.'s can be issued after all of the necessary building inspections have been satisfactorily completed. Commercial C.O.'s will also involve inspections by the Fire Marshal's Office to ensure that the structure is in compliance with all fire codes. In certain instances, given the scale or complexity of the project, other offices may be involved in the process.

Temporary Certificate of Occupancy

Pending the issuance of a permanent Certificate of Occupancy, a temporary Certificate of Occupancy may be issued. The temporary Certificate of Occupancy will be valid for a period established by the Building Official, pending completion of an addition or during partial occupancy of a structure.

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Certificate of Completion

A Certificate of Completion is a permit that ensures that a structure has been built in compliance with all applicable building and zoning regulations. Certificates of Completion are issued for any building activity that might not have an associate use, or for construction which does not involve a structure (such as a pool, signs, or parking lot)s.

A certificate of completion is required for any of the following:

- Use of a parking lot constructed or enlarged and not in conjunction with a building or structure;
- Site changes including but not limited to landscaping, parking lots, façade changes in a design district, or a change to an existing site that is not done in conjunction with a building or structure that requires a building permit; or
- Site improvements associated with a telecommunications tower.

It is unlawful to occupy or utilize any structure that does not have a valid Certificate of Completion or temporary certificate of completion.

Upon request of final inspection, the Building Official may determine if the work complies with all applicable provisions of the Building Code and the UDO, if so, a Certificate of Completion will be issued.

Temporary Certificate of Completion

Pending the issuance of a permanent Certificate of Completion, a temporary Certificate of Completion may be issued. The temporary Certificate of Completion is valid for a period established by the Building Official, pending completion of an addition, or during partial occupancy of a structure.

Sign Permits

The City of College Station requires a sign permit in order to install, erect, move, add to, or alter a sign. All signs must be in conformance with the UDO unless otherwise instructed by the Zoning Board of Adjustments.

A permit is required for the following:

- Apartment/condominium/manufactured home park identification signs;
- Attached signs;
- Development signs;
- Freestanding signs;
- Low profile signs;
- Roof signs; and
- Subdivision and area identification signs.

No permit is required for the following signs:

- Real estate, finance, and construction signs;
- Directional traffic control signs;
- Home occupation signs; and
- Noncommercial signs.

It is the responsibility of the owner or the leasing agent to assign the available freestanding sign square footage to individual building tenants.

Commercial banners are no longer permitted in the City. Exceptions are made for grand openings and special events, which allow for a 14-day permit to display commercial banners.

Maintenance and Repair

Sign permits are not necessary for routine cleaning, painting, repainting, and other normal repair of a sign, unless a structural or size change is made. Maintenance may also include replacing the sign face. Repainting or replacement of materials in a design district must receive approval of either the Administrator or the Design Review Board.

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Frequently Asked Questions Commercial Development

1. When do I need a commercial building permit?

A commercial building permit is required for new construction (including additions and alterations). A commercial permit is also required for demolition work. The exceptions include single-family detached structures, duplexes, and townhomes; those types of structures require a residential building permit.

2. What are the preliminary requirements for pursuing a commercial building permit?

Check to ensure that you comply with all zoning and platting requirements, then submit the site plan and required documents for review by the appropriate Staff.

3. What do I have to submit to the Building Department to obtain a plan review?

Submit three (3) comprehensive sets of plans and one (1) set of specifications, if provided, to the Planning & Development Services Department along with a completed building permit application.

4. When can I start construction?

Construction can be started any time after the building permit and development permit have been issued. A building permit expires if work has not started within 180 days from the date the permit was issued.

5. Can I obtain a foundation permit if complete plans for my project are not ready for submission?

Yes, the building code allows for phased approval of a project. A foundation only permit may be issued by the Building Official under certain circumstances. However, the holder of such permit is proceeding at the holder's risk without assurance that a permit for the entire structure will be granted at a later date.

6. How many building inspections of my construction will be performed? When will the inspections be made?

The total number of inspections for a commercial project varies based on the scope and complexity of the job. Building Inspection personnel will perform inspections within 1 working day from the time the request is called in by the contractor. Construction inspections are typically performed in the following order:

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| (1) Plumbing/Sewer Rough | (7) Energy/Insulation |
| (2) Building Foundation (Slab) | (8) Plumbing Final* |
| (3) Electrical Rough* | (9) Electrical Final* |
| (4) Plumbing Top Out* | (10) Mechanical Final* |
| (5) Mechanical Rough* | (11) Building Final |
| (6) Building Frame | |

*Note: The inspections with an asterisk can be performed in any order. However, the electrical rough, mechanical rough, and plumbing top out must be completed prior to the building framing and the electrical final, mechanical final, and plumbing final must be completed prior to the building final.